þÿEmotions in protest : unsettling the past in ex-c personal accounts in northern Mozambique

Katto, Jonna

2018-09

þÿKatto , J 2018 , ' Emotions in protest : unsettling the past in ex-comba accounts in northern Mozambique ' , Oral History , vol. 46 , no. 2 , pp. 53-62 .

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/307770

publishedVersion

Emotions in protest: unsettling the past in ex-combatants' personal accounts in northern Mozambique

by Jonna Katto

Abstract: This article focuses on the mutual production of emotions and narratives about the past in the oral history accounts of ex-combatants of the liberation struggle (1964-1974) in northern Mozambique. It draws on life history research among the ageing ex-combatant community in Niassa between 2012 and 2014. It explores the emotional aspects of remembering and meaning making in history-telling, focusing especially on disappointment and anger expressed by many ex-combatants today. More specifically, the article analyses how such negative emotions are negotiated in the ex-combatants' personal accounts and how these negotiations shape the narration of the liberation struggle. I argue that the ex-combatants' emotional talk can be read as a bodily protest against the official historisation of their experiences.

Keywords: history-telling; bodily protest; emotional talk; ex-combatant life histories; Mozambican liberation struggle

Between 1964 and 1974, hundreds of youth from the rural areas of northern Mozambique were recruited by the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)[1] to participate in its political-military campaign against Portuguese colonial rule. The ten-year guerrilla war was mainly fought in the bush thickets of the northernmost parts of the country.

While at independence higher ranking officers were transferred to the capital city and other urban areas, a majority of the rank-and-file soldiers returned to their rural origins. Most of them were unceremoniously demobilised, some right after independence and others a few years later. Many of them sought out the location of surviving family members (as people were dispersed and families broken apart during the war), opened fields and started their civilian life as farmers. This paper focuses on the life memories of these now ageing ex-combatants in the northern province of Niassa.

As Niassa was one of FRELIMO's main war fronts during the struggle, its landscapes are intrinsically tied to Mozambique's national history. Yet since independence the area has been severely marginalised in state politics and spatial practices. These days – forty years after independence – there is a lot of disappointment and anger among the ex-combatant community in Niassa. For them, independence has not fulfilled its promise of freedom and a good life. For many, the experience of independence has been tied to a continued experience of violence in the form of socio-economic and political marginalisation. In this article I explore the emotional aspects of remembering and meaning making in history-telling. More specifically, I study how negative emotions are negotiated in the ex-combatants' personal accounts and how these negoti-

ations shape the narration of the liberation struggle.

The intensity of the ex-combatants' emotional talk[2] in Niassa became apparent to me on my first visit to the provincial office of the Association of the Former Combatants of the Liberation Struggle (ACLLN) in the provincial capital, Lichinga. ACLLN is the official gatekeeper to the ex-combatant community in Mozambique, so I was required to seek their approval before starting my research. At the ACLLN office I was welcomed by Mr Kalambo, who first quietly and attentively listened to my plans about interviewing female ex-combatants (also known as members of FRELIMO's Female Detachment or DFs), but turned very serious as I finished my monologue. He insisted that first, before going any further, I needed to understand something about the situation and sentiments of ex-combatants in Niassa. With a sombre face and empathetic body language, he then started to describe the 'miserable living conditions' of ex-combatants. 'Many', he explained, 'don't have proper houses but live in houses of reed'. Their overwhelming sentiment, as he further elaborated, is that of sadness. Others, he insisted, even die of these negative feelings. After 'sacrificing their lives' (their youth that they can never have back), they should be living good lives, he argued. Yet while the *chefes* in Maputo are living well, the ex-combatants in Niassa are suffering. As he described, many suffer from mental health problems; others completely lose the will to live. He said that he wanted to explain this to me, because normally the female ex-combatants refuse to be inteviewed about their participation in the liberation struggle.

The emotionality of Mr Kalambo's speech made a strong impression on me, especially since he seemed to evoke the ex-combatants in Niassa as an 'emotional community'[3] bound together through a particular system of negative feelings.[4] For a while after our encounter, I was left wondering what was to become of my research. But as it turned out, Mr Kalambo's prediction was not completely accurate. As I started recruiting research participants, it became apparent that ex-combatants were not as impossible to interview as initially envisioned by Mr Kalambo. This was largely due to the sensitive mobilisation skills of a female ex-combatant called Helena Baide.[5]

I first met Helena at ACLLN, and from the beginning she was very enthusiastic about the research project and my plan to write about the life histories and present-day experiences of DFs in Niassa. Sharing the same background as our interviewees and knowing many of them personally, she helped me to negotiate access and build rapport within the ex-combatant community. The way Helena positioned me when introducing me played an especially important role in how I was accepted. She liked to emphasise that I had come from 'far way' just for the purpose of writing about the DFs. Her words evoked positive reactions from most DFs. As some of them expressed, the fact that someone had come looking for them meant that what they had done during the war still continued to matter.

Together with Helena, we took to the different neighbourhoods of the provincial capital Lichinga as well as the rural villages of northern Niassa to locate many of these women and to talk to them about their lives and experiences in the guerrilla army. While most of the ex-combatants we encountered during the year we worked together happily agreed to be interviewed, a lot of the interviews were characterised by emotional outbursts commenting on the situation of ex-combatants in Niassa and their relation to the Frelimo-state.[6] It was this disappointment and anger that clearly motivated many ex-combatants to participate in the interviews.

Through the interview process, I came to understand these emotional outbursts and language as integral to the histories that the women wanted to tell and share. In this article, I explore this emotional talk and especially what it does in oral history dialogues. I am interested in how emotions shape the telling of the history of the liberation struggle; but also how emotions are negotiated in this narration and meaning making of the past. As I will argue, emotions simultaneously shape and are shaped by the narration of the past in the ex-combatants' accounts.

Mutual production of emotions and narratives about the past

In this article, my approach to emotions goes beyond binary models of inner-outer or biological-cultural.[7] My starting point is that while language is constitutive of our emotions and constantly shapes the way we feel our feelings, emotions are intimately intertwined with the sensory experiences of our bodies. Thus, while I recognise the cultural constitution of emotions,[8] my paper goes against what I see as a tendency in cultural studies as well as oral history to overly emphasise the social constructedness of emotions. Following a feminist phenomenological understanding, my approach involves thinking of discourse and materiality together in an intertwined relationship.[9] This also includes studying emotions, not as individual, but as relational. While emotions are embodied, as Sara Ahmed writes, they operate not within the boundaries of the skin but on the skin surface of the body.[10] Emotions shape bodies and the boundaries between individual as well as collective bodies.[11] As such they are always intersubjectively shared.[12]

In my analysis I look at how emotions are expressed and made sense of in the interactional interview situation. I also acknowledge that the vast majority of emotional life is not verbally expressed. We often experience our emotions as ambivalent, resisting capture in words. In interactional situations, bodily gestures as well as our voice can point to these tensions. In this study I understand speech as a bodily performance. Thus, together with emotional words, the bodily features of speech such as tone, pitch and amplitude of voice and accompanying bodily gestures form part of the emotional talk that I analyse.[13] As I will show, emotional talk touches upon and gives us hints of

sensory memories that often and easily elude narrativisation. At the same time, by studying emotional expressions in these dialogues, I am not trying to uncover a secret, hidden archive of feelings, but my focus is on the emotional talk that people purposefully bring into the public sphere and try to make intelligible to others. My interest is thus also on how the individual and the social interrelate.

Overall, many of my interviewees expressed pleasure in having the opportunity to reflect upon their past life experiences. There are, however, important ethical issues to consider when conducting interviews on emotionally sensitive topics. Mindful that the interviews could bring forth negative feelings and painful memories, I avoided confrontational questions, favouring more open-ended questioning that allowed my interviewees more narrative control. The interview situation, as I understand from a feminist standpoint, is a power-laden interactive situation of two-way negotiation.[14] Non-verbal communication also played a crucial role in the interviews. I sought to be attentive to the body language of our interviewees and respectful of their emotional boundaries. My co-interviewer Helena was crucial in helping me navigate these boundaries and find the right sensitive language to ask about more difficult topics. She helped create a supportive atmosphere in the interview situations, in which humour also played an important role. At times Helena would tell funny stories about her own experiences to relieve the tension and make people laugh. We usually ended the interviews by asking for more affirmative stories. Similarly to Sean Field, I understand the role of the oral historian as that of a facilitator, who 'contribute[s] to forging public spaces' in which alternative histories can be heard.[15] Importantly, these spaces are shaped together and in interaction with our interviewees.[16] My interviewees, for instance, had their own ideas of where they wanted their narratives to be heard, and used the oral history interview as a platform to make certain political claims.

Altogether I conducted life history interviews with thirty-four female ex-combatants. These interviews usually consisted of three sessions, often held two to three months apart, and each session lasted one to two hours. The first interview session, which focused on memories of childhood and homeplace before the war, was also designed to help build rapport, and in a gentle way introduce the women to the idea of the 'life history interview' and the type of questions it entailed. This was important because the topic of the second interview was more sensitive, dealing with the women's memories of their experiences of the liberation struggle. The third and last life history interview focused on experience of life and sense of homeplace in the post-independence period. In addition to the life history interviews, I conducted further in-depth interviews with ten women. These women were selected because of my rapport with them in the previous interviews, as well as their willingness and availability to participate in further interviews. My objective in these interviews was to deepen my understanding of the relationship between the body, the senses and (violent) memories. This was a theme that had emerged in the life history interview material. The interview excerpts that I analyse in this paper are taken from the interviews conducted in the final stage of fieldwork. Moreover, my analysis of these interview accounts was informed by my broader research material that also included individual and group interviews with fifteen male ex-combatants.

As this article will show, the history of the liberation struggle is necessarily a history of the encounter between combatants and Frelimo (the liberation front whose state-like power during the liberation struggle became transformed into actual state power at independence). These days this encounter is remembered in strongly emotional language. Moreover, continued contact between ex-combatants and the state continues to shape their oral histories. In this article, I will show how the history and meaning of liberation are continuously negotiated in the 'contact zone of impressions' (to use Ahmed's notion) between the ex-combatant's body and the state. Ahmed argues that feelings 'take the "shape" of the contact we have with objects'.[17] These feelings do not arise from a single contact, but are always influenced by 'past histories of contacts'; moreover, the 'moment of contact' also 'reshapes the bodies' involved in that contact. Furthermore, as Uli Linke writes, adopting a similar analytical framework, in the 'zone of contact' between state and embodied subject, 'the political field assumes a somatosensory gestalt'.[18]

In what follows, I examine through the accounts of Maria, Helena and Lúcia how emotions are negotiated, and how these negotiations mediate relations between the ex-combatants' bodies and the state. Moreover, I study how in this sensuous relationship the meaning and history of liberation is also reconfigured. These three cases were chosen for closer analysis as they show the different forms that emotional negotiations can take and the variety of affects they can produce in the individual DFs' oral history interviews. First, I look at Maria's account, in which negotiating one's emotions and evading negative feelings involves a re-narration of the past.

Re-feeling the past

Maria Ajaba was recruited in 1966 to join the FRELIMO guerrillas, the same year that the Female Detachment was formally established.[19] For the first year, Maria worked at a female base in Niassa before she was sent for political-military training at FRELIMO's training camp in Nachingwea, southern Tanzania. During the war, she worked as a vice political commissar of the Female Detachment at FRELIMO's central base of Ngungunyane in the western sector of the Niassa war front. Nowadays Maria is a grandmother, a farmer and a war veteran, but she also continues to be actively involved in the political work of ACLLN and the Frelimo party. In the excerpt below, which is from our fourth interview together, we discuss

FRELIMO's principal military bases (marked with ● on the map) in Niassa during the liberation war. The map was created in Google Earth by the author, and illustrated by Noora Katto.

the reasons why some ex-combatants still feel like they have not escaped the war. In offering her explanation, Maria starts by comparing FRELIMO's political discourse during wartime with the state politics of today:

> But that politics that they used to give… it doesn't compare. Right? Because they said, you, when the war ends, you are going to have… all that the white has: grinding mill, shop. Right? Car. You are going to have an improved house, you are going to have… when the war ends. [Continues in a high-pitched voice.] But that there what they were talking it was politics for us to have morale… right? To have morale… not to desert in the war! It isn't that it will happen. No. That's what I for my part can say, that politics was courage… for us not to flee from the war, to say, iih, I have to fight a lot so also I can have! I have to fight a lot so I can have a brick house… right? So we fought. And they said you are going to receive a lot of money. Iih! That big amount of money so that we can do everything. Yet to give all at once the state didn't manage. [The state] is giving bit by bit. Aah, you have a pension… another [receives] four… 4,000 [meticais]; another [receives]… 5,000; another [receives] 6,000; another [receives] 7,000 [continues in a very high-pitched voice] and finally those ministers that receive up to fifteen… 15,000… they receive![20]

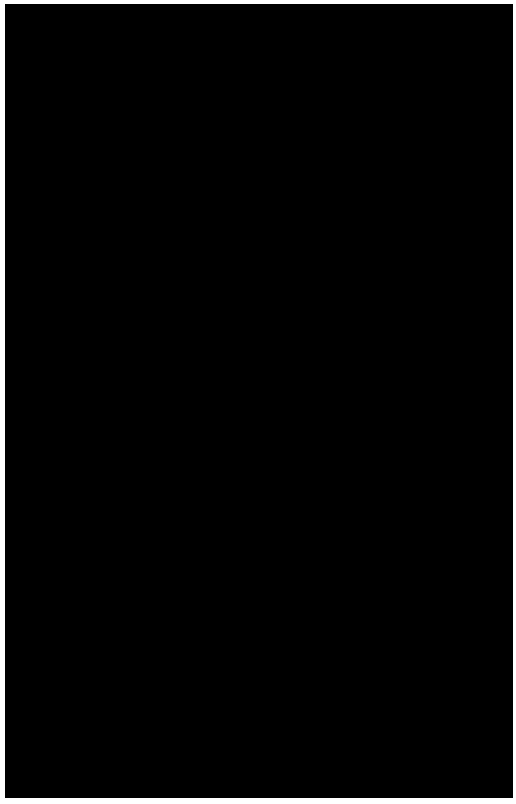
Maria first evokes the remembered promise of national independence with a discourse of racial and class equality: a question of blacks having 'all that the white has'. Yet, immediately following this statement, she reinterprets the intent of this political language into a discourse driven by pragmatics. Its purpose, she analyses, was to motivate the soldiers and give them moral strength to fight (and not desert) in order to free Mozambique from colonial rule. The socialist promise of class equality was never meant to be actualised.[21] As Maria goes on to argue, the state is doing what it can in terms of pensions. Curiously, in her description the ex-combatants are differentiated into economic classes based on their pension size; at the bottom are those receiving 4,000 meticais while at the top the ministers receive 'up to 15,000'.

I suggest that Maria's way of reinterpreting FRELIMO's wartime nationalist discourse can be read as an attempt to undo the history of painful encounters (between ex-combatant body and state) that has led others to experience the state as hateful and nationalist politics as meaningless. Importantly, Maria refuses to define the nationalist promise as a lie and thus emotions of disappointment are held at bay from determining the ex-combatant-state relationship. This is further exemplified in the following excerpt, in which Maria continues by reflecting on the emotions of those ex-combatants who still feel the suffering of war on their bodies:

> That's why the person that... is thinking of the suffering of the war and arrives here not getting anything… they are the ones that are saying: 'Ummh, we [feel] the suffering of the war, and even as we have independence, [continues in a high-pitched voice] we aren't forgetting!' You don't forget because of the suffering that still continues! No, I don't live in the peace that I fought for! It doesn't exist... that way of saying that I fought. Even, even the population… despises: 'But what do they win/gain… those that fought? Better for us who didn't go to war. We are receiving something at least. Those as they are illiterates don't have anything!' That's why the person… hearing this expression, the person feels bad. Or even not talking... seeing the person that you met here [in the town after the war] who studied here. [The person] has a beautiful brick house, has a beautiful car, has beautiful clothes. Their children studied well, freely! The person feels bad! […] We took an oath; when we die, we want a car to take our dead by car to bury in the cemetery. But you see a funeral of a… of a child of a director [referring to state officials]... or a person from a company you are going to see a car when you are going to the cemetery. But you see a funeral of a former combatant... that doesn't have anything... you won't even see food there. In distress! That's why when you heard, there are others that are living in real misery, it's true.[22]

As Sara Ahmed argues, 'emotions *do things*, and work to align individuals with collectives'.[23] Here, Maria 'feels with' those who experience that the 'suffering of war' still continues. This is further expressed by the affective tone of her speech and body language. Although arguing that it is not a feeling she shares with these ex-combatants, in her account, she feels their emotions. This is emphasised in her shift to the first-person narrator: 'I don't live in the peace that I fought for!' Furthermore, Maria herself becomes aligned with these 'other' ex-combatants through the perceived resentment of the population. Here, the population is defined as those who did not go to war; who stayed in the cities; who never experienced the suffering of war; who managed to study; and who managed to obtain that which the ex-combatant only dreams of having: a beautiful brick house, a beautiful car, beautiful clothes and good education for their children.

Through the sensed contempt of the population, the ex-combatants become made into something deserving to be loathed instead of loved and respected. These emotions, following Ahmed, form the bodily spaces of both subject and object of the encounter. However, in Maria's account, the population that the ex-combatants feel envy towards is not the common folk, but the political and business elite (high state officials and people from private companies) who have successfully claimed access to national resources, leaving the majority of ex-combatants on the sidelines as poor observers. Compared to them, as Maria describes, ex-combatants do not even receive dignified funerals. Moreover, as she



Mozambique from Rovuma to Maputo. The map was illustrated by Noora Katto.

argues, 'We took an oath; when we die, we want a car to take our dead by car to bury in the cemetery'. Here, the blood oath strongly evokes the violent historical ties between the body of the ex-combatant and the state. It also emphasises that this relationship is built on expectations of reciprocity. The combatants gave their bodies in service of the struggle for national liberation, and now, through the category of ex-combatant, they claim special rights in relation to the state.

Maria's account is a good example of the ongoing emotionally multi-layered mediations between ex-combatant and state. Maria clearly aligns herself with the state, but at the same time she is forced to renegotiate the meanings of a history of contact that is clearly marked with negative emotions, personal and collective. But as Maria passionately argues, later in the interviews: 'I have love for my country because I liberated it. All of this I brought from the bush to here'. In this statement, the relation between ex-combatant and nation is mediated by feelings of love and pride. Embedded within it is also an implicit insistence for her love to be reciprocated. Overall, Maria's account shows her constantly 'moving toward' the state. Maria is one of the DFs that expressed feeling free and content. As she laughingly accounts, she sleeps well, no one disturbs her, and if she hears a noise outside ('kuru-kuru-kuru-kuru'), it is most likely a thief, nothing more serious.[24]

Discontinued histories and new affective alignments

Helena's account shows another kind of affective encounter that involves a 'moving away' and a radical redefinition of one's bodily space in relation to the state. Helena, like Maria, is known and respected for her active engagement in the activities of the Organization of Mozambican Women (*Organização da Mulher Moçambicana;* OMM) and the Frelimo party; yet over the years – like so many other ex-combatants in Niassa – she has grown increasingly frustrated and angry over the way she has been treated as a war veteran by the state. To me, she has repeatedly expressed disappointment over her small pension; after all, as she argues, she was a commander in the guerrilla army. Also, despite her hard work, she still has not managed to complete her zinc-roofed brick house and continues to live in her old grass-roof hut. In the following interview segment, she speaks about how she feels about her role as ex-combatant:

> *Jonna Katto: And this role of being an ex-combatant, what do you think about this role?*
>
> *Helena Baide*: [overlapping speech] This role – that there I can consider but... it isn't... not so much anymore. It's that that is making me lose… the memory from my head. Mmm. That's why I can't put a lot into saying that I am an ex-combatant... When saying I am an ex-combatant, that suffering it starts. Mm. That's why I have to say, 'I am a farmer!' When I say, 'I am a farmer!', I am with my hoe. I am working. I am making a living. The children are living well. [...] No longer will I think/worry a lot. Hmm? Now ex-combatants, we... used to be... in the past, not today [continues speaking in a very quiet voice] not today. Today I am a farmer. My role is one only... [the role] of the female detachment also... used to be! Today it is less.[25]

Helena's narrative echoes other ex-combatant accounts in the negative emotions that seem to mediate ex-combatant-state relations in Niassa. Yet, in this interview situation, Helena speaks of how the negotiation for a sense of personal peace is leading her to distance herself from the category of ex-combatant. This movement is described as a reaction to the hurt that positioning herself in this category continuously generates ('I can't put a lot into saying that I am an ex-combatant... When saying I am an ex-combatant, that suffering it starts'). Suffering here appears to refer to the negative emotions that overwhelm her when she concentrates too much on thinking about her life history, reflecting especially on her experience in the war.

The ex-combatant category is intimately tied to the state and burdened by a violent history of previous contacts. Thus Helena makes the choice of pulling away and identifying herself more passionately as a 'farmer'. This moving away involves a significant reconstitution of bodily space. Helena speaks of regaining control over her life and wellbeing as a farmer; she expresses confidence in her own bodily strength to cultivate and provide food and other basic necessities for her family. As she says, 'No longer will I think a lot'. Importantly, I suggest, becoming a 'farmer' constructs a new kind of relation with the state.[26] She no longer re-members herself into a community that is continuously defined through the negative feeling of pain and suffering.[27] Instead, she claims belonging to another collectivity and a different historical continuity. As Helena argues, the negativity of her emotions related to the category of ex-combatant are causing her to 'lose her memory'. I suggest that this points to how her feelings are hindering her from making meaningful sense of her life history and especially her war experience.

Helena was not alone in seeking new affective alignments outside the ex-combatant community. During my fieldwork, some DFs I interviewed told me about other female ex-combatants they knew who – in search for more positive socio-spatial identifications – had moved out of their villages to live the 'life of the *machambas* [fields]'. This means that they had distanced themselves from the village community and permanently established their homes close to their *machambas* in the otherwise uninhabited bush. This presents an even more radical 'moving away' than Helena's case. As these were the ex-combatants that I was unable to interview, the full meaning of their movement remains unclear. However, other ex-combatants seemed to think that this distancing of themselves from the village community was linked to their negative emotional state. In the next section, I turn to look at Lúcia Bala's experience of how the commemoration ceremony operates to reconfigure the painful contact between the state and ex-combatant collectivity, and how the state discourse of remembrance helps ex-combatants negotiate their emotions.

Collective commemorations and the shaping of feelings

Marking the important dates in national history, commemoration ceremonies play a significant role in mediating the ex-combatants' experience of remembering and making sense of their life trajectories as ex-combatants. In the interviews, the women often commented on the positive emotional affect that commemoration ceremonies have for them, though they acknowledged that these happy feelings often fade quickly. Lúcia, who trained in the first group of recruits from Niassa, worked as the head of the camp kitchen at FRELIMO's central base of N'sawisi in the eastern sector of the Niassa war front. In the following extract, Lúcia speaks about how the state addresses the ex-combatants in the commemoration ceremonies:

> The words [/speech/language] that appear to me... They mobilise us, we that were in the war, there in the army. They say: 'These here are your elders. You have to respect them with force! You can't look at them badly/disrespectfully because for us to have indepen-

> dence/peace and to be in these jobs/positions, it is because of those there. You can't look at them as if they were small/insignificant people for they are those who liberated us so that we were able to study, so that we managed to do something [with our lives]'. [28]

These words by the state representatives have the ability to change, at least momentarily, the ex-combatants' emotions. [29] As Lúcia continues to elaborate further on her personal feelings:

> Now like this, it often happens the heart has [joy] and does 'yaah!' [refers to a peaceful sensation], [30] but now like this, yes. Like this we could be comfortable/settled. Yeah, they give us morale. They are respecting us they aren't abusing us. Now if they were abusing us, the heart would continue to do and say 'ih, but now like this'. It used to do 'juuu!' [refers to a negative sensation of the heart; constant discomfort, worry, concern], but now it has returned to a sense of tranquillity. It is because of that there... that what they are doing and saying: 'These elders here, they are the ones who liberated us in this country here, until we got our independence, and the children are even doing this [refers to positive behaviour] because of these elders here'. And I consider that 'aah', they aren't forgetting us a lot, they are remembering us, yes.

Here, a past history of abusive behaviour by the state towards the ex-combatants is evoked ('they aren't abusing us. Now if they were abusing us') and linked together with a history of bodily sensations and emotional responses ('the heart' that used to 'say "ih"' and 'used to do "juuu!"'). Negative emotions that are linked to experiences of past rejections are carried with the body into new encounters. However, the commemoration ceremony, in Lúcia's account, 'finally' breaks with the history of past practices. As Lúcia narrates, in the ceremonies, the state representatives establish the ex-combatants as 'your elders' (Ciyaawo: *acakulungwa wenu*), enacting a relationality of respect. Here, 'being remembered' by the state opens her body for a new negotiation, a new configuration of her bodily space in relation to the national collective. Private and painful bodily sensations are transformed into feelings of content. I suggest that the commemoration ceremony involves a 'public grieving', [31] to draw from Judith Butler, in which the suffering of ex-combatants is humanised and their lives are recognised as worthy of being remembered and mourned (compared with Maria's interview excerpts). Forgetting, on the other hand, implies negation and becomes itself an act of bodily violence.

Emotions in protest

The remote location of the northern province of Niassa in terms of national geography both allows for and incites more critical renderings of the memory of national liberation. In the interview accounts, this spatial distance is often narrated as isolating, an experience of separation from the nationalist elite and one's former military commanders residing in Maputo. [32] The interviews also point to the importance of the official institutional settings and commemorational ceremonies in constituting sites of 'remembering together' and thus helping to build a sense of belonging to the national ex-combatant collectivity. Still, especially in Niassa, the relation between the (Frelimo-) state and the ex-combatants is influenced by negative sensations and emotions, which the women (and men) I interviewed sought in different ways to manage.

In Maria's case, this involved aligning herself more closely with the state and rewriting her own memory of the war, and the nationalist promise of independence and peace, in order for it to fit more closely with the actual outcome of independence, a failure to bring an end to social and economic inequality and suffering. In Helena's case, this negotiation leads her to position herself as a farmer, outside the whole ex-combatant-state relationship and its violent history. Her happiness and wellbeing, she insists, is associated with identifying herself more fully through the civilian category of farmer; importantly, this draws in another kind of attachment to space and social community. Finally, in Lúcia's account, the state discourse of remembrance and public recognition of ex-combatants' suffering helps Lúcia to reverse some of the personal and collective hurt she feels when remembering the history between the state and the ex-combatant collectivity, which is also part of her personal history.

Sara Ahmed argues that 'we become alienated – out of line with an affective community – when we do not experience happiness in proximity to objects that are attributed as being good'. [33] During the war, 'independence' was construed as the object of ultimate happiness and peace for the national community, including the ex-combatants. Yet for many the experience of independence has been tied to a continued experience of violence. Helena, for instance, divides her life into three phases: the liberation war, the civil war fought between 1977 and 1992 (which among ex-combatants is commonly referred to as 'the war of RENAMO') and contemporary times, that is, the time after the war. She speaks of understanding how the combatants 'suffered' during the liberation war to liberate the country. During the civil war, their suffering was caused by RENAMO (the Mozambican National Resistance, an anti-Frelimo government guerrilla movement), and RENAMO was the reason that the state did not manage to provide for them. Yet she struggles to understand why today, after the war of RENAMO has long ended, she still continues to suffer. As she narrates:

> *Helena Baide*: In the war of Portuguese colonialism we were liberating our country. Then, before the end of three years, the war of RENAMO begins!... now between family.
>
> *Jonna Katto: Aah, so you suffered again?*
>
> *Helena Baide*: Aah-ah [affirmation], we suffered

> once again: Running from one side to the other! Many died... also being killed by knife... That already passed. Now today... the war of today is for what? Why am I suffering? Until today no one is remembering me. No one knows me! Now let's go to Maputo... opening the processes [documents related to her pension], always you will find: Helena Baide – Helena Baide – Helena Baide. But this Helena Baide is where?!? Is she a doll? Is she not a person who moves with blood? [34]

Gail Weiss writes about the 'ethical demands that bodies place on other bodies'. [35] She calls these the 'bodily imperatives', which she argues, 'emerge out of our intercorporeal exchange and which in turn transform our body images, investing and reinvesting them with moral significance'. [36] Helena's words 'but this Helena Baide is where?!? Is she a doll? Is she not a person who moves with blood?' places the living, pulsing body at the centre of her political and ethical claims. In the ex-combatants' narratives, 'suffering' needs to be understood as a political discourse of social belonging.

DFs who express bodily well-being (like Maria) also call for the ethical treatment of those ex-combatants that are economically marginalised. For instance, Fátima Aquili, another ex-combatant, comments on the plight of those ex-combatants who do not manage to cultivate their fields because of old age, and who 'live in tiny houses, covered by grass roofs that leak when it rains'. Yet, as she argues, these people 'did a huge job during the struggle' and they deserve better. [37] None of the women I interviewed in Niassa spoke of having any thoughts or expectations of economic gain at the time of their recruitment into the army. However, a large number spoke of promises made during the war (especially by FRELIMO's first leader Eduardo Mondlane). As they remembered, these promises did not necessarily concern money, but they did speak about the good life that independence would bring. At the time, these nationalist notions were defined through a socialist discourse of social and economic equality. And though these ideals have long been forgotten in state discourse, the ex-combatants' voices still continue to evoke them as they protest the meaning that 'independence/peace' has acquired through the neoliberal state discourse and economic practices, especially as they themselves have benefited little from these processes.

In the ex-combatants' accounts, emotional talk is intertwined in the very telling of the narrative of the liberation struggle. As I suggest, this is not a question of managing or controlling emotions through narratives; rather, emotions and narratives of the past are negotiated in a mutually constitutive relationship. More importantly, emotions have a political function in the ex-combatants' accounts in that they disallow a settling of the past. Their emotional talk disrupts and refuses the official teleological narrative of the liberation struggle, which portrays history as a progression from oppression to liberation. The ex-combatants' emotional talk can thus be read as a form of protest against the official historisation of their experiences. Our senses (in which emotions are also always intertwined), as C Nadia Seremetakis argues, are 'potential sources of alternative memory'. [38] In the ex-combatants' accounts, emotional talk evokes memories of sensory histories that have been silenced in public discourse. Their emotional talk, moreover, can be read as a form of bodily protest that incorporates ethical demands.

Acknowledgements
This research was supported by the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

NOTES

1. In this study I make a distinction between 'FRELIMO', the liberation front, and 'Frelimo', the political party.
2. I use 'emotional talk' to refer both to the communication of emotion through expressions that denote emotion/affect and to the 'embodied performance of affect', which according to Goodwin and Goodwin involves the 'artful orchestration of a range of embodied actions', such as pitch, volume, bodily gestures and timing. These embodied actions are not necessarily linked to an explicit emotional vocabulary. See Marjorie H Goodwin and Charles Goodwin, 'Emotion within situated activity', in Alessandro Duranti (ed), *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader*, Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001, pp 239-257.
3. The members of an 'emotional community' share a particular system of feeling in which certain emotions and modes of emotional expression are valued above others. See Barbara H Rosenwein, 'Worrying about emotions in history', *American Historical Review*, vol 107, no 3, 2002, pp 821-845; Barbara H Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, London: Cornell University Press, 2007.
4. In contrast to Maputo, the emotional talk of suffering is more intense in Niassa, where the memory of the suffering of the war and the experience of suffering in the present are often linked together and construed into a history of continued suffering. Among the nationalist elite in the capital, the suffering of the liberation struggle is remembered more nostalgically as a collective experience belonging to the past. See also Jonna Katto, 'Landscapes of belonging: female ex-combatants remembering the liberation struggle in urban Maputo', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 40, no 3, 2014, pp 539-557.
5. Helena was both a co-interviewer in my interviews in Ciyaawo as well as a research participant in the project. Importantly, as a co-interviewer, she drew on her experiences as a DF in translating my interview questions into a language more understandable for the women. In some sense I lost control of the questions as Helena translated them, and I was thus forced to share authority with her in the interview situations. Sometimes I found this frustrating and urged her not to take liberties with the translations. Yet many times her creative reformulations of my interview questions gave me new insight and introduced new avenues of inquiry. My research would have looked very different without her involvement, and it was our collaboration that produced the material that is also the subject of this paper.
6. Since taking over state power at independence, Frelimo has largely

controlled the state and dominated state politics, and thus it remains valid to talk of a 'Frelimo-state'. See also for example Helge Rønning, 'The FRELIMO state', presentation at 'The Conference on Legitimacy of Power – Possibilities of Opposition', 30 May to 1 June 2011, Jinja, Uganda. Accessed online at www.cmi.no/file/?1323, 1 September 2017; Jason Sumich, 'The party and the state: Frelimo and social stratification in post-socialist Mozambique', in Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard (eds), *Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa*, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011; Aslak Jangård Orre, 'Entrenching the party-state in the multiparty era: opposition parties, traditional authorities and new councils of local representatives in Angola and Mozambique', PhD dissertation, University of Bergen, 2010.

7. This paper draws especially on scholarship on emotions in feminist cultural studies (for example Sara Ahmed, Alison M Jaggar and Clare Hemmings) and in the history of emotions (for example William Reddy and Barbara Rosenwein). See for example Alison M Jaggar, 'Love and knowledge: emotion in feminist epistemology', in Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (eds), *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989, pp 129-155; Clare Hemmings, 'Invoking affect: cultural theory and the ontological turn', *Cultural Studies*, vol 19, no 5, 2005, pp 548-567; Rob Boddice, 'The history of emotions: past, present, future', *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, vol 62, 2017, pp 10-15.

8. See especially Catherine A Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod (eds), *Language and the Politics of Emotion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990; Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986; Catherine Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions: Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and Their Challenge to Western Theory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988; Michelle Z Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

9. The body is a necessary starting point in my analysis in this article. My conceptualisation of the body balances between a social constructivist and a phenomenological position. While I draw on the Butlerian idea of the body as a site of power, disciplinary practices and resistance, at the same time, the notion of the 'lived body' aligns me closely with feminist phenomenology of embodiment. Moreover, I suggest that reading these positions together allows us to better explore the intersections between discourse and material practices of the body. See for example Sara Heinämaa, *Toward a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir,* Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003; Lisa Folkmarson Käll, 'A being of two leaves: on the founding significance of the lived body', in Janne Bromseth, Lisa Folkmarson Käll and Katarina Mattsson (eds), *Body Claims*, Uppsala: University Printers, 2009, pp 110-133; Linda Alcoff, 'Phenomenology, post-structuralism, and feminist theory on the concept of experience', in Linda Fisher and Lester Embree (eds), *Feminist Phenomenology*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, pp 39-56.

10. Sara Ahmed, 'Collective feelings: or, the impressions left by others', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol 21, no 2, 2004a, pp 25-42.

11. Ahmed, 2004, pp 25-42; Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004b.

12. See Mark Paterson, Martin Dodge and Sara MacKian, 'Introduction: placing touch within social theory and empirical study', in Mark Paterson and Martin Dodge (eds), *Touching Place, Placing Touch*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012, pp 1-28. The authors argue that all sensory experiences are intersubjectively shared. See also Elizabeth Tonkin's discussion on the difficulty of translation and thus the limits of intersubjectivity in the sharing of emotions: Elizabeth Tonkin, 'Being there: emotion and imagination in anthropologists' encounters', in Kay Milton and Maruška Svašek (eds), *Mixed Emotions: Anthropological Studies of Feeling*, Oxford: Berg, 2005, pp 55-69.

13. Joanna Bornat captures this well in describing her analysis of listening to emotion. See Joanna Bornat, 'Remembering and reworking emotions: the reanalysis of emotion in an interview', *Oral History,* vol 38, no 2, 2010, pp 43-52.

14. See for example Donna Haraway, 'Situated knowledge: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', *Feminist Studies,* vol 14, no 3, 1988, pp 575-599.

15. Sean Field, 'Beyond "healing": trauma, oral history and regeneration', *Oral History*, vol 34, no 1, 2006, p 41.

16. See also for example Alistair Thomson, 'Moving stories, women's lives: sharing authority in oral history', *Oral History*, vol 39, no 2, 2011, pp 73-82. Thomson discusses the complexities (and sometimes the failures) in sharing authority in the oral history interview process, and especially in the publication process.

17. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2004b, p 5.

18. Uli Linke, 'Contact zones: rethinking the sensual life of the state', *Journal of Anthropological Theory*, vol 6, no 2, 2006, p 206.

19. During the liberation struggle, hundreds of girls (many under the age of fifteen) were recruited into the ranks of guerrilla soldiers. On recruitment they received the same basic military training as their male comrades and worked mostly in the transportation of war material, and in FRELIMO's bush hospitals and nurseries. To a varying degree they also engaged in direct combat with male soldiers. Some of the women I interviewed were already recruited by FRELIMO in 1965, though the formal integration of women into the guerrilla army occurred with the creation of FRELIMO's Female Detachment (DF) in 1966.

20. Interview with Maria Ajaba; recorded by Jonna Katto in Lichinga, 19 June 2014. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. I translated the interviews conducted in Portuguese into English. My language assistant Bernardo Aubi Silajo assisted significantly with the translation of the interviews conducted in Ciyaawo. All my interviewees requested that their real names be used. This was recorded in the oral informed consent process.

21. It is uncertain to what extent these promises were part of FRELIMO's political mobilisation strategy during wartime. The emphasis they receive in the ex-combatants' narratives shows how their experience of the present informs their memory of the past. See also Oficína da História, Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEA), Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 'A Situação nas

Antigas Zonas Libertadas de Cabo Delgado', Maputo: Oficína da História, CEA, 1983. In their study of the former liberated areas of Cabo Delgado in 1983, the authors argue that the idealisation of the war expressed by the population in their interviews should be understood as a critique against the government for its failure to bring better living conditions to the population. It is noteworthy that this kind of idealisation of the war period was less detectable in my interviews.

22. Interview with Maria Ajaba, 19 June 2014.

23. Ahmed, 'Collective feelings', 2004a, p 26.

24. Interview with Maria Ajaba, 19 June 2014.

25. Interview with Helena Baide; recorded by Jonna Katto in Lichinga, 23 May 2014.

26. Other women ex-combatants have in their old age gained renewed interest in religion, and some have started studying at local Koranic schools.

27. Remembering the war and national liberation can be a violent experience, especially when the affective community to which one re-members oneself is constituted through emotions of pain and suffering. Through remembering our lives, Victoria J Palmer argues – echoing also the words of Maurice Halbwachs – we 'call into being others who are part of that story' and thus 'memories are actions of re-membering' ourselves into relations with those others. For Palmer, this means calling into being (also those violent) relations that have been. See Victoria J Palmer, 'UnFeeling: embodied violence and dismemberment in the development of ethical relations', *Review Journal of Political Philosophy,* vol 6, no 2, 2008, pp 17-33.

28. Interview with Lúcia Bala; recorded by Jonna Katto in Mavago, 1 June 2014.

29. Here, I draw on William M Reddy's work on emotives, which as he argues, have the ability to alter our feelings. Although, unlike him, I do not see language as having a managerial function in the negotiation of our feelings. See William M Reddy, 'Against constructionism: the historical ethnography of emotions', *Current Anthropology*, vol 38, no 3, 1997, pp 327-351; William M Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; Jan Plamper, William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein and Peter Stearns, 'The history of emotions: an interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory,* vol 49, no 2, 2010, pp 237-265.

30. The Ciyaawo language is rich in ideophones, and they were widely used in the ex-combatants' oral history narratives. As expressive words ideophones are closely tied to sensory and emotional experiences.

31. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence,* London: Verso, 2003.

32. In Niassa it is not uncommon for people, also ex-combatants, to refer to Maputo as 'the nation'. José Luís Cabaço (2010, p 299) argues that in people's minds the nation thus becomes equated with the state and the government. Maputo is perceived as the centre of command, the location where all the major decisions about the country are made. These are then implemented in the provinces and the districts. This reflects people's experience of the hierarchy of spatial relations; Maputo is the location of central state power, and the rest of the country follows its lead. See also José Luís Cabaço, *Moçambique: Identidades, Colonialismo e Libertação,* Maputo: Marimbique, 2010.

33. Sara Ahmed, 'Creating disturbance: feminism, happiness and affective differences', in Marianne Liljeström and Susanna Paasonen (eds), *Working with Affect in Feminist Readings: Disturbing Differences*, London: Routledge, 2010, p 34.

34. Interview with Helena Baide, 23 May 2014.

35. Gail Weiss, *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality*, New York: Routledge, 1999, p 5.

36. Weiss, 1999, p 158.

37. Interview with Fátima Aquili; recorded by Jonna Katto in Lichinga, 4 December 2012.

38. C Nadia Seremetakis, 'Intersection: Benjamin, Bloch, Braudel, beyond', in C Nadia Seremetakis (ed), *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*, London: University of Chicago Press, 1996, p 20.

Address for correspondence:
jonna.katto@helsinki.fi